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WHAT HE VILIFIES.

And all the world wondered after the Beast. *Apocalypse* 13:3.

BY

ALLISON DRAKE, M. A., B. S., Ph. D.

PUBLISHED BY
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PREFACE.

Bith andgit æghwær sélest.—*Beówulf.*

NEWPORT, KY., A. D.
March 12, 1892.

MR. INGERSOLL AND WHAT HE VILIFIES.

Mr. Ingersoll came and went; and from the silence that has ensued, it might be inferred he had conquered.* He seemed to meet with the approval of the vast audience assembled, and one man was heard to conjecture that the "auditors must nearly all be free-thinkers." Free-thinkers! What a significance in that term! Free-thinkers have more freedom in these days than ever before: they are at liberty to follow a leader and believe whatever is presented to their credulity; but they must jeer the Bible, — at least laugh while others jeer it. The rank and file of the mob (if I may unite those terms) of free-thinkers have had their mental caliber and credulity well described by Professor Huxley: "One and twenty years ago . . . the dominant view of the past history of the

* Mr. Ingersoll lectured on "Shakspere" at the Grand Opera House, Cincinnati, Ohio, Sunday Night, Feb. 14, 1892. To this lecture reference is made in these pages.

earth was catastrophic. Great and sudden physical revolutions, wholesale creations and extinctions of living beings, were the ordinary machinery of the geological epic brought into fashion by the misapplied genius of Cuvier. It was gravely maintained and taught that the end of every geological epoch was signalized by a cataclysm, by which every living being on the globe was swept away, to be replaced by a brand-new creation when the world returned to quiescence. A scheme of nature which appeared to be modeled on the likeness of a succession of rubbers of whist, at the end of each of which the players upset the table and called for a new pack, did not seem to shock anybody."

The situation in the present instance is such that should Mr. Ingersoll in cruel ruse, avoiding the name, extol the Christian religion, he would at regular intervals receive out-bursts of applause from his free-thinking listeners, though he might have to append the name of Voltaire to Scriptural quotations. A great thinker would detest this blind and servile adoration as a true champion of liberty does

the commending shouts of a howling mob; but this is a species of mental greatness scarcely to be expected of a man who as an orator may be much in a little, but who otherwise shows himself to be little in much. And even Mr. Ingersoll's oratory could sustain its reputation without that embellishing monotony it so often possesses in the line of pet phrases repeated *ad nauseam*. In the lecture if he once said "blossoming into beauty," he said it a score of times. Everything "blossomed into beauty," except the monotony of the repetition. The speaker constructed a stone arch. I had thought this piece of masonry, by reason of the adamantine character of the material and the inherent strength of such adjustment, capable of resisting the floral stress that I knew about to come upon it; but when the keystone was inserted, the arch like everything else "blossomed into beauty," and that too before a vine o'ergrew it. This is but a sample. However, lest I seem Zoilean (I hope Mr. Ingersoll will pardon my alignment of him with Homer!) I shall desist, and permit his oratory to pass without further

challenge ; indeed I should imitate the Orator, if I did not admit that a thrill of admiration during his speech possessed me often, and especially when, describing the last moments of Socrates, he said that "that philosopher met death as serene as a star meets the morning ; " but here I expected Mr. Ingersoll to bring in something about "blossoming into beauty ; " for "The Beautiful," you know, (besides being Socrates's (!) personal *point de force,*) was ever until his passing, the quarry of his quest.

I had thought Mr. Ingersoll in treating of Shakspere would find his theme so vast and deserving that he could afford to intermit for the evening his customary ridicule of religion ; but it was Sunday night, and Mr. Ingersoll *perhaps* thought (for he is so thoughtful in such regard), that here would be an opportunity to win great applause and offend no one inasmuch as all the theologians together with their unthinking herds would be elsewhere, performing divine service. Every one, however, but Mr. Ingersoll, knew that many people—although Mr. Ingersoll profanes

openly their most cherished sentiments—would be drawn, by the greatness of the theme, from their usual place of worship, thinking that at least on this occasion they might, without then and there receiving affront, unite even with Mr. Ingersoll in paying devotion to the "Divinity that stirs within us." In this they were mistaken; for Mr. Ingersoll loves laughter; and if he finds his chosen theme unsuited to produce it, he knows a source never failing of the usual supply. It is perhaps too much to ask of Mr. Ingersoll (it is certainly too much to expect) that he should forego this pleasure at civility's demand. But we pass by this display of rudeness to the living; for he even rifles the grave of the long since dead, and brings forth mighty Bacon to ridicule before an ignorant throng; and when he decried the genius of that giant's intellect, how gratifying to the informed, it was, to hear the unlettered clap!

Mr. Ingersoll quoted Bacon, but must have read him with the goggles of the "Cynic, who never sees a good quality in a man but never fails to see a bad one; who is the

human owl, vigilant in darkness and blind to light, mousing for vermin and never seeing noble game." Whenever I read Bacon I am amazed at the force of his diction, and awe-struck at the grandeur of his conceptions. Nor am I alone in this; for an impartial critic who wrote long before the Bacon-Shakspere controversy arose, says, in describing Bacon's Essays: "The intellectual activity they display is literally portentous; the immense multiplicity and aptness of unexpected illustration is only equaled by the originality with which Bacon manages to treat the most worn-out and commonplace subjects. . . . No author was ever so concise as Bacon; and in his mode of writing there is that remarkable quality which gives to the style of Shakspere such a strongly-marked individuality; that is, a combination of the intellectual and imaginative, the closest reasoning in the boldest metaphor, the condensed brilliancy of an illustration identified with the development of thought. . . . Many of Bacon's essays are absolutely oppressive from the power of thought compressed into the smallest possible compass."

Great and merited as is this praise, Mr. Ingersoll's onslaught upon the genius of Bacon was such that those unfamiliar with the latter and unacquainted with the fierce cynicism of the former, must have thought Bacon a man devoid of ordinary intelligence. In a man whose motto is "Honor Bright," we should expect, if we knew him not, to find an uncommon endowment of that "spirit which is said to be able to raise mortals to the skies;" at any rate, a minimum of "that other spirit which would drag angels down."

Of Bacon's moral character, I shall attempt no defense. Genius has often been morally weak. Orators have notoriously been cowards. Demosthenes deserted the ranks in time of battle; and Cicero, as all the world knows, was as timid as a hare. Unless Rumor circulates a lie of unwonted magnitude, others of less oratorical note have sustained that reputation far in excess of their genius.

The seeming cause of Mr. Ingersoll's insane attack upon the genius of Bacon, is the recent suggestion that Bacon wrote the works commonly attributed to Shakspere. If Bacon be at all re-

sponsible for this suggestion, the world owes him a debt of gratitude it will never be able to pay. But there is another cause, the real cause, of Mr. Ingersoll's spleen,—a cause that will at once be made manifest by a quotation from Bacon: "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a Mind. And therefore God never wrought miracle to convince atheism; because his ordinary works convince it. It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion; for while the mind of man looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them and go no farther; but when it beholdeth the chain of them, confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity. The Scripture saith: 'The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God;' it is not said, 'The fool hath thought in his heart;' . . . for none deny there is a God, but those for whom it maketh that there were no God." Herein Bacon utters sentiments repugnant to the refined intellect of Mr. Ingersoll; but the latter, whose wit ever comes to his rescue, in the midst

of his polished oratory retaliates with an ungarnished pun upon the name of the philosopher. What a spectacle! What bathos to be indulged in by a chaste and classic orator, by a man sixty years of age! We should scarcely expect such a puerile exhibition yet. But if Mr. Ingersoll's sense of dignity was lacking, the event showed that his judgment was sound; for most of the listeners relished the childish pun as one of the finest wit-strokes of the evening.

Mr. Ingersoll's great fame rests upon his destruction of the Bible and upon the impetus he has given to free-thought; that is, thought free from the hampering demands of logic. Aristotle fancied he had classified all possible syllogisms; but he failed to note, among others, the one commonly employed by Mr. Ingersoll and his free-thinking disciples—a later enthymeme—wherein wit is the premise and laughter, the conclusion. Barring Mr. Ingersoll, the ablest logician I have ever known,— ablest in the employment of this syllogism, was an orator in Salt Lake City. Think not from that name that I am seeking to disparage Mr. Ingersoll; for the orator was not a Mormon; he was a traveling vender of "Indian"

drugs. He stood up in his cart in the middle of the street, while his telling wit-logic swept away with the besom of destruction all the accumulated medical knowledge of the civilized world. I could not but recall at the time Mr. Ingersoll's similar masterful manner of demolishing the Bible.

Mr. Ingersoll's most grievous fault is his untempered cynicism. His flaw-glasses may be admirably constructed for the concentration of vision; but with them he can see nothing but the flaw; and if he should turn them upon that most resplendent object of the jewel world—the Koh-i-noor—he would behold only imperfection. What a distress unto himself must be the Cynic who sees throughout all nature naught but jaggedness unmellowed!

The poems of Homer have delighted the world for near three thousand years and during that time have been maligned by only one critic (cynic of course), though all account their substance mostly an alloy of myth; and whether first sung by blind Mæonides or garlanded by many geniuses of various times and climes, they have ever been and will ever be treasured by mankind as a boon from highest heaven. Likewise

the Bible, even if denied peculiar sanctity and ranked among the works of profane genius, will still preserve a sacred dignity ; for it is full of the finest fruits of highest genius, — full of unrivaled beauty. Yet Mr. Ingersoll sees no beauty. Let us read the twenty-third Psalm :

> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
>
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.
>
> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
>
> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou *art* with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
>
> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enimies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
>
> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

We may scoff at the idea that "There's a Divinity that shapes our ends," but we must all agree that that Psalm is a thing of beauty and will remain a joy forever. And for patriotic sentiment, the cxxxviith Psalm as far surpasses all else as the starry hosts of heaven outshine the glow-worms of the dust :

> By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.
>
> We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.
>
> For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us *required of us* mirth, *saying*, Sing us *one* of the Songs of Zion.
>
> How shall we sing the LORD'S song in a strange land?
>
> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget *her cunning*.
>
> If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Mr. Ingersoll has vilified the greatness of Moses as he has slandered the genius of Bacon. It may be different with orators, but other people feel the soul enlarge at an exhibition of bravery and strategic skill even when, as in the case of Alexander and Cæsar, manifested in questionable cause; but when displayed in the noble effort to lead one's people from bondage unto freedom, these qualities command from all but cowards the supremest admiration. Of Moses it has been beautifully written:

"This was the bravest warrior that ever buckled sword;
He, the most gifted poet that ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher traced with his golden pen
On the deathless page truths half so sage as he wrote down
for men!"

St. Paul tells us that there are many kinds of glory: "The glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars." So likewise there are many kinds of genius. There is a genius of wisdom; there is another genius of music, another of poetry, and another of goodness. They are all heaven-born and divine, but divinest of all is the genius of goodness.

The New Testament is the greatest poem ever written. If an ill-fated woman had not already borne the name, I would call it Pandora; for assuredly it is gifted with all the gifts of genius. It abounds with the genius of poetry and above all with the genius of goodness. If it has mar or blemish, it has suffered it in the transit of ages; for I cannot but believe that its authors were masters of poetic art and that they possessed the

genius of goodness as none others before or since. Plato tells us that there is an inspiration of the Muses, a madness, which, seizing a pure and pliant soul, arouses it and imbues it with poetic frenzy; and, garlanding the numberless exploits of ancient heroes, teaches them to posterity; and whoever approaches the gates of poesy and song without the gift of Muse-inspired madness, thinking himself all-sufficient through the aid of art, is lacking; and his poetry born of saneness is obscured by the poetry of madness.

The authors of Pandora or the All-gifted (for I must use the name) had the inspiration of the Muses, but instead of madness they had gladness; and their poem gladdens all but the Cynic in his earthy, unpoetic madness. Plato wrote divinely, and the genius of goodness pervades all that he wrote; but his poetry is ante-classical; for the glow and fervor of the genius of goodness and gladness were not felt till a later date.

> In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,
>
> And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.
>
> For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wild-

erness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

Whose fan *is* in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

And they brought a colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

And many spread their garments in the way; and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Observe the scene of Jesus and the woman at the well. Say Jesus was not divine in the Scriptural sense: the negation only heightens the effect. What a marvelous conversation for a man and a woman sitting at that well in the twilight of human progress! How the story makes one thirst

for a quaff of that pure Water! The Man saith unto the woman:

> Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:
>
> But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a WELL of water springing up into everlasting life.
>
> The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

How passing beautiful! But Mr. Ingersoll will tell us that Jesus never held that conversation, and that it is the production or interpolation of a later age. I am not now discussing age. One thing is certain: the beautiful is there. If it be an interpolation, so let it be. Let the interpolator interpolate again; and if he equal or surpass the beauty of the first attempt, let us o'erlook the wickedness. Nay more, if Mr. Ingersoll have the gift of such interpolation and will not interpolate, he ought by threat or torture to be made to interpolate; but ere we begin the torture, let us see token of the gift. I go to hear Mr. Ingersoll at times when I have grown tired of what is better. He talks fairly(?); but his thought and diction have not the welling beauty of these "interpola-

tions." There is an air of effort, and his gems though showing beauty have an artificial cast. Truly the genius of poetry and the genius of all beauty, goodness and gladness were abroad in those days. They say history repeats itself. There were a repetition would work us no annoy. Listen to St. Paul, poet and orator, as he inimitably describes the crowning virtue of the true orator. The description is the masterpiece of all oratory:

> Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.
>
> And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.
>
> And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.
>
> Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,
>
> Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;
>
> Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the TRUTH.

If St. Paul spoke as eloquently as he wrote, he was the greatest orator that ever lived. All

that militates against this, is the indubitable proof left us that he was no coward. There is another opposing circumstance, but it is one that I have always looked upon as a miracle, the greatest miracle recorded in the Bible. It is that a young man who had the good fortune to hear St. Paul's oratory should go to sleep in listening to it. He paid a speedy penalty, however, in falling from the third loft; and his name, Eutychus (*good fortune*,) is certainly all that saved his neck.

As a framer of moral precepts, St. Paul has no rival. Isocrates, the original Old Man Eloquent, in his discourse *Ad Demonicum*, has left us an indication of what he could not do; for, while his precepts are intrinsically fair, they lose all hue in the presence of the matchless and living beauty of the specimens left us by St. Paul. Listen again:

> I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.
>
> And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of faith;

Or ministry, *let us wait* on *our* ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching;

Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that *giveth let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;

Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord;

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.

Bless them which persecute you; bless, and curse not.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.

If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

Whenever I read those sublime utterances, I am ravished with their beauty, and for the nonce am sirened from all else I have ever felt, thought, heard, read or known: Plato is left to repose; Melesigenes in sleep forgetteth his blindness; Æschines and Demosthenes are couched side by side without disturbing dream; while that modern Orator, who despises these and kindred geniuses, has gone to that mysterious realm — Oblivion — from whose bourn the Cynic ne'er returns.

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